# Nonconformity Linked To Peer Pressure

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ATHENS, GA—According to a study released Tuesday by the University of Georgia's Institute For Social Research, a strong link exists between nonconformity and peer pressure among teenagers and young adults.

Commissioned in 1995 to examine the growing trend of nonconformity among 13- to 21-year-olds, **the three-year study found that 85 percent of U.S. youths actively (1)** defy standard societal norms—adopting "alternative" modes of language, behavior and dress—as a means of winning the acceptance and approval of their peers.

**"Kids today are told, over and over, by their classmates, their siblings, and images on TV and in magazines, that normal, mainstream behavior isn't 'cool,'" institute director and study co-chair Iris Evantine said.** **(2)** "The message these kids are receiving is: 'C'mon, don't you want to be different like us?' Sadly, kids who resist these pressures to be different are usually ostracized. For the average teenager these days, the pressure not to do what everyone else does is enormous, and often unbearable."

"I'd really like to be normal and conform, because, at heart, I'm not a risk-taker at all," said Grand Rapids, MI, high-school sophomore Christine Kornowicz. "But if I want to fit in, I have to be different. If you don't stick out, everyone at school makes fun of you."

"I've started wearing all black, painting my nails, and shaving my head, just to fit in," said Jonathan Auger, a Binghamton, NY, high-school junior. "You can't understand how hard it is for a young person not to make waves these days."

The trend of nonconformity**—which soared to mass popularity in the late 1960s before eventually tapering off in the '80s—(3)** has experienced a resurgence in popularity since 1991, when **Nirvana's *Nevermind* album (4)** generated nationwide interest in the nonconformist Seattle "grunge-music scene" and its surrounding alternative culture. In the years since, those who have chosen to remain within mainstream society have become virtual pariahs.

"Today, **nonconformity is everywhere (5)**," Evantine said. "From the Piercing Hut in the suburban mall to the fast-growing, 'radical,' multi million-dollar business of snowboarding, all of America is not going along with the crowd."

While nonconformity is most prevalent among youths, the trend has spilled over into older groups, as well.

"We are finding a shockingly high rate of nonconformity across virtually all age groups, particularly the 40- to 55-year-old middle-class white-male demographic," Evantine said.

According to Institute For Social Research statistics, 38 percent of middle-aged males are defying society's rule that men be prohibited from wearing ponytails; 51 percent regularly wear denim or leather garments, long regarded by the mainstream as bold and unconventional; and 73 percent listen to such nonconformist alternative-rock groups as The Wallflowers, Counting Crows and Oasis.

Additionally, the defiant, iconoclastic fashion statement of earrings has now reached an epidemic level of 89 percent among 40- to 55-year-old men.

Evantine noted that, due to the boom in nonconformity, the **percentage of Americans who currently make up the "mainstream" stands at an alarmingly low 7 percent. (6)**

"We should all be grateful to the precious few who have stuck to their guns and conformed, even at the cost of exclusion from the vast majority," Evantine said. "And we must pray that they continue to conform, for without this tiny group of people, there would be no one to rebel against."

The institute's report, which has been condemned as "subversive" by such powerful nonconformist institutions as MTV, Pepsi, Hot Topic and Facebook, concluded with a call for increased public willingness to rebel against rebelliousness.

"Now, more than ever, we must have the courage to stand up and embrace the norm, no matter how marginalized we may become in doing so," the report read. "We must be brave enough to walk the road less travelled and conform."

Paraphrase the article in a two sentence response. The first sentence is broad and encompasses the main idea pf the entire article; the second sentence highlights the two most important details. These two sentences are separated/linked by using a semi-colon effectively.

Which reading learning target did you practice when writing these two sentences? Rationalize your response.

Which writing techniques did the author use to create meaning? Complete the chart below to dissect the text.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Writing technique** | **Meaning, significance, effect of writing technique** |
| 1 |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |
| 6 |  |  |

Which reading learning target did you practice by completing this chart? Rationalize your response.

The author’s superficial, “comprehension” purpose is that too many kids are being non-conformists. However, what’s really going on? What is the author’s actual purpose? Explain the author’s overall message/moral/lesson.

Which reading learning target did you practice when writing this justification? Rationalize your response.

After comprehending the text, analyzing author’s craft, and thinking about the theme of the text, write a response where you **explain how the author builds an argument**. First, review what you said the theme is. Then, review the chart of writing techniques you found that the author used to strengthen the logic and persuasiveness of his argument. Your response should NOT persuade your reader, but rather **explain HOW the author built an argument to persuade his audience.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Concerns** | **Standard** | **Points of Pride** |
|  | **Purpose**   * Clearly answer question * Analysis: how does evidence prove claim * TS: “Claim is true because literary device” |  |
|  | **Support**   * Abundant evidence * Text references * Evidence supports claim * Relevant and accurate |  |
|  | **Mechanics**   * Follow grammar rules * Punctuate correctly * Possessive “S” * Comma usage * Spelling is clear |  |
|  | **Style**   * Word choice is precise * Syntax is varied * Wording is not formulaic, but unique |  |